

SPIRIT OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

December 9-10, 2023

2nd Sunday of Advent

Ministers: Every Member of Spirit of Grace

Pastor Scott Hackler – Pastor Gary E Benson

OUR MISSION

Proclaiming God's Love, God's Promises,
and the Abundant Life

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENT

INVOCATION

We worship in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!
Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Praise to you, O God, our salvation who is near. You hold us in our waiting and keep us awake to the world. You show up in our lives at unexpected times. Bless us as we light this candle to keep vigil for your arrival. We trust that even though we do not know the day or the hour, you hurry to gather all people to your peace.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, / born to set thy people free; / from our fears and sins release us; / let us find our rest in thee. / Israel's strength and consolation, / hope of all the earth thou art, / dear desire of ev'ry nation, / joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, / born a child, and yet a king; / born to reign in us forever, / now thy gracious kingdom bring. / By thine own eternal Spirit / rule in all our hearts alone; / by thine all-sufficient merit / raise us to thy glorious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788. Public Domain.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance.
Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Everlasting God,

We confess to the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to help others. To these we are captive, so we choose comfort over courage. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of this waiting world.
Amen.

Hear these words of assurance: God frees you from your captivity, clothes you with garments of salvation, and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's promises are eternal, and God's blessing rests on you.

Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE "Christ, Be Our Light"

Christ, be our light! / Shine in our hearts. / Shine through the darkness. / Christ, be our light! / Shine in Your church gathered today.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957; Text & music (c) 1993 Bernadette Farrell, admin. OCP Publications. All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE A-706001.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

ANTHEM "Come, Come Emmanuel"

Joyful Spirit Singers

FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶A voice says, "Cry out! "And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? / You have the words of eternal life. / Alleluia! Alleluia!

THE GOSPEL Mark 1:1-8

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" ⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The gospel of the Lord,
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

"Wilderness"

Pastor Hackler

HYMN OF THE DAY "On Jordan's bank the Baptist cry"

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry / announces that the Lord is nigh; / awake and
hearken, for he brings / glad tidings of the King of kings!

Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin; / make straight the way for God within, / and
let us all our hearts prepare / for Christ to come and enter there.

We hail you as our Savior, Lord, / our refuge and our great reward; / without your
grace we waste away / like flow'rs that wither and decay.

Stretch forth your hand, our health restore, / and make us rise to fall no more; /
Oh, let your face upon us shine / and fill the world with love divine.

All praise to you, eternal Son, / whose advent has our freedom won, / whom with
the Father we adore, / and Holy Spirit, evermore.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

After each petition: Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

OFFERING PRAYER

God our provider,

by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION

"Come to the Table of Mercy"

Come to the table of mercy, / prepared with the wine and the bread. / All who are hungry and thirsty, / come, and your souls will be fed. / Come at the Lord's invitation; / receive from his nail-scarred hand. / Eat of the bread of salvation; / drink of the blood of the Lamb.

Text: Claire Cloninger, b. 1942. Text © 1991 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (ASCAP) c/o Integrity Media, Inc., 1000 Cody Road, Mobile, AL 36695; Juniper Landing Music (admin. Word Music); and Word Music (ASCAP). Reprinted under ONE LICENSE A-706001.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION

BLESSING AND PRAYER

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

Generous God,

in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

BENEDICTION

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit remain upon you now and forever.

Amen.

CHRISTMAS CAROL "Go Tell it on the Mountain."

Refrain

Go tell it on the mountain, / over the hills and ev'rywhere; / go tell it on the mountain / that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching / o'er silent flocks by night, / behold, throughout the heavens / there shone a holy light. *Refrain*

The shepherds feared and trembled / when, lo, above the earth / rang out the angel chorus / that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*

Down in a lonely manger / the humble Christ was born; / and God sent us salvation / that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt. Public Domain.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

SERVING AS WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Choir Director	Ken Carnes
Choir Accompanist	Sandy Hobbs
Saturday Scripture Reader	Shelly Lettiere
Sunday Scripture Reader	Dave Sitzman
Saturday Usher Coordinator	Glenda Jones
Sunday Usher Coordinator	Rich Frusciano
Audio/Lighting	Jerry Huston

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Visitors, Guests and Friends! Let us know that you are here by using this QR code. We are so happy that you have joined us in worship.



2024 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPE PACKETS – “Thank You!” to all those who have picked up their 2024 Contribution Envelopes! For those who have not yet picked up their Envelopes for next year, they are on a table in the lobby (by the Welcome Counter). Please Note: If you did not pick up or use your 2023 envelopes, the 2024 envelopes have not been issued. *However*, if you still want them for next year, please notify Merly in the office Merly@spiritofgrace.com or 623-977-6000, ext. 100).

INTERESTED IN CPR TRAINING? - Contact Faith Community Nurse Deborah Frusciano at 623-977-6000, ext. 140 or via email: deborah@spiritofgrace.com.

GRIEFSHARE WILL RESUME Thursdays, January 25th to April 18th from 10:00am - 11:30am in the Fellowship Hall.

ADVENT GIVING TREE 2023 GIFT CARD COLLECTION:

For this year’s Advent Giving Tree, we will once again be sharing the light and hope of Advent with Military Families at Luke Air Force Base. We are collecting gift cards and Christmas cards to give to the families. Thank you for your continued support of the Advent Giving Tree. Your prayers and generosity show our Military Families how much their service and sacrifice mean to our congregation. Please bring gift cards and Christmas cards by December 12. For further information Contact Deborah 623-977-6000 ext 140 or 602-909-8369 cell.

SPRING BASEBALL - Baseball tickets for the AZ Diamondbacks vs. Texas Rangers. We’ll be in the Legion’s section for food, fellowship, and cheering. The cost of \$52 includes food and drink. Checks only.

CAROLING/SOUP SUPPER – On Sunday, December 10th at 2:00pm we meet in the fellowship hall to get organized and head out at 2:00 pm. We’ll carpool to various locations then return for hot soup in the fellowship hall. See you there!

AVAILABLE NOW IN SOG’S LIBRARY - Copies of Pastor Vern Anderson’s 2016 presentations on the Quran and the three divisions of Muslim people in the world. (Pastor Vern is a former SOG Senior Pastor.) The CDs are now available for check out.

SPIRIT OF GRACE MEN'S BREAKFAST meets Tuesday December 19 at 8am. Don't forget to sign up in the lobby.

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION BREAKFAST - Our 25th Anniversary Celebration is Sunday, January 14, 2024. The breakfast will be held in the church fellowship hall rather than the Sonoran Plaza as previously announced. Tickets for the breakfast are **SOLD OUT**. If you'd like your name added to the **Breakfast WAITLIST**, please call the Fellowship Team at **480-438-1115**. If you did not purchase a breakfast ticket, you will be invited to return to the church sanctuary to participate in the celebration program and musical entertainment later that morning. Watch for details in future bulletins and on the website.

GIFTS OF HOPE—One of our special emphasis projects this year is **Medical Education for Tanzanian Physicians**. Dr. Mark and Linda Jacobson worked for over 35 years as ELCA medical missionaries in Arusha, Tanzania and helped establish the Kafika House (formerly known as the Plaster House.) Shortly before his death from brain cancer in February 2022, they set up the *Dr. Mark and Linda Jacobson Endowed Scholarship Fund* with a goal to fully educate a new Tanzanian physician every year. Scholarship recipients are required to work three to five years in Tanzania upon completion of their training. The need is great! In 2021, the World Health Org. reported the Tanzanian doctor-to-patient ratio is 1 to 20,000, while the recommended ratio is 1 to 4,000. You can give a gift of life-changing learning that extends well beyond any one individual—**Gift #5**. Donation forms are in the Narthex.

CHOIRS If there are those who have been in choir, or those who would like to sing just once, I would like to encourage you to think about singing with us for the upcoming church anniversary celebration. Start attending the first Tuesday after the New Year. Rehearsal begins at 4:15 pm. We will extend the rehearsals until 5:45. Choir Director Ken Carne

Spirit of Grace Holiday Worship Schedule

Saturday	December 23 rd	4 th Week of Advent	5pm
Sunday	December 24 th	4 th Week of Advent	9am

Sunday, December 24th Christmas Eve 4pm and 6pm

Saturday	December 30 th	5pm
Sunday	December 31 st	9am

SPIRIT OF GRACE CALENDAR
December 9 – December 17

Saturday, December 9

5:00 pm Worship Service

Sunday, December 10

9:00 am Worship Service

Monday, December 11

9:30 am Martha circle

1:00 pm Mary circle

Tuesday, December 12

9:30 am Staff Meeting

9:30 Rachel circle

12:00 pm Counseling Ministry

*By appointment only

with Dr Joe Dramise

3:00 pm Chimes Rehearsal

4:15 pm Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, December 13

9:00 am Counseling Ministry*

*By appointment only

with Dr Joe Dramise

Thursday, December 14

9:30 am Deborah Circle

1:00 pm Elizabeth Circle

Friday, December 15

9:00 am 25th Anniversary Team

Saturday, December 16

5:00 pm Worship Service

Sunday, December 17

9:00 am Worship Service

*Rachel Circle is meeting in June Fredericksen home.
14118 W Sky Hawk Drive Sun City West Tuesday at 9:30am*